



**GALLAUDET UNIVERSITY REGIONAL CENTER  
NORTHERN ESSEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

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July 12, 2006

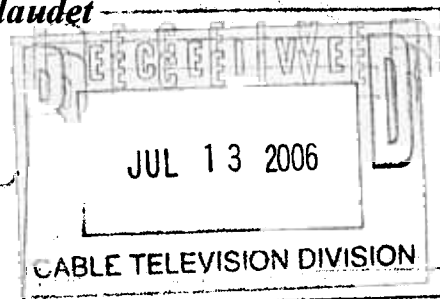
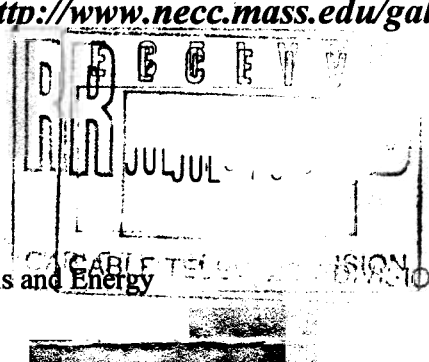
Alicia Matthews

Director, Cable Division

Department of Telecommunications and Energy

One South Station

Boston, MA 02110



Dear Director Matthews

As the Massachusetts Department of Telecommunications and Energy (DTE) considers streamlining the local cable franchising process. I am writing on behalf of the Gallaudet University Regional Center (GURC) to let you know that opening up the cable market to more competition is good for all consumers including the deaf and hard of hearing community.

GURC in partnership with Northern Essex Community College brings the resources of Gallaudet University of Washington, D.C. to the northeast region of the country. We address the educational, transition, and professional development needs of deaf and hard of hearing people from birth through adulthood, their families, and the professionals who work with them. We offer training workshops, and technical assistance that improve the lives and open up opportunity for our students and their families.

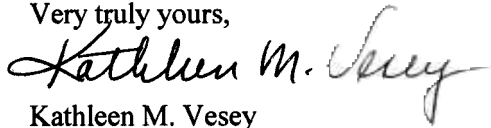
The technology that Verizon is developing for its cable system is long overdue, and more consumers should have the opportunity to benefit from it. Unlike existing current cable television systems, Verizon's fiber optic network has enough capacity to someday accommodate real-time, two-way video conversations, an application that until now was a dream for our students and their families.

This kind of capability will open up new doors as we assist our clients to visually communicate with others. The new video network holds great potential for job opportunities, business development, better access to affordable health care, and an entire world of new services, such as educational support via two way interactive video between the home and the school. This is the technology we've awaited for years.

We are excited that Verizon's new fiber to the home network is being built in Massachusetts, and are proud that our students may be among the first in the nation to benefit from Verizon's video services. However, it is important that the deaf and hard of hearing community have more access to this technology sooner. Cable companies have held a lock on the state's television marketplace for decades. As a result, the cable monopoly has had lots of incentive to raise prices and little incentive to improve the quality of service. True competition leads to lower prices, new ways for programmers to reach out to our community with educational and information services, and improved service quality.

We as a community know first hand how advanced video technology can improve the quality of life, not just for the deaf and hard of hearing community, but for all people with myriad needs. Please adopt Verizon's proposal to bring more consumers the benefits of competition and this network as soon as possible.

Very truly yours,



Kathleen M. Vesey  
Director

cc: Director of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation, Janice  
Tatarka  
Chairwoman Judith Judson  
Commissioner James Connelly  
Commissioner W. Robert Keating  
Commissioner Brian Paul Golden